Art Institutions and Race in the Atlantic World (London, 24–25 May 19)

The Centre for American Art at The Courtauld Institute of Art, London, May 24–25, 2019

Nika Elder

Art Institutions and Race in the Atlantic World, 1750–1850

The long eighteenth century gave rise to a host of art institutions throughout the Atlantic world, including the Royal Academy of Arts in London, the Academia de San Carlos in Mexico City, and the Academia Imperial de Belas Artes in Rio de Janeiro. Vibrant markets for paintings, sculpture, decorative arts, and prints developed alongside and beyond these established institutions, creating networks of cross-cultural exchange that mirrored the economic ties among Great Britain, Africa, the Caribbean, and the Americas during this period. These cultural developments were inextricably linked with the profits and the cultural logics of colonialism and slavery. Building on important recent work on the visual culture of slavery and abolition, this conference examines the reciprocal relationship between the fine arts and racial ideologies during the apogee and decline of the transatlantic slave trade. The talks will consider sites of artistic production from throughout the Atlantic world, including Brazil, Britain, Jamaica, Massachusetts, and Mexico, and cover a wide variety of topics, including museum collections, artists' models, the hierarchy of genres, print culture, and exhibitions of images and human beings. In sum, this two-day gathering examines how theories of race informed the production, circulation, collection, and display of art, and how those processes in turn solidified and promulgated understandings of race.

https://courtauld.ac.uk/event/art-institutions-and-race-in-the-atlantic-world-1750-1850

Programme

Friday, May 24

10-10:30 Opening remarks

10:30-11:45 Panel 1
"From Novohispanic Castas to Mexican Citizens: Colonialism, Race, and the Academy of San Carlos in Mexico City"
Ray Hernández-Durán, Associate Professor of Early Modern Ibero-American Colonial Arts and Architecture, University of New Mexico

"India in the City: The Ambiguous Place of East India House and the India Museum"
Geoffrey Quilley, Professor of Art History, University of Sussex

12:00-1:15 Panel 2
"'This she looking black, this Molly dressed thing of a man': Mai and Thayendanegea at the Royal Academy in 1776"
Esther Chadwick, Lecturer in Early Modern Art History, The Courtauld Institute of Art

"'A Peep at the Natives': Exhibitions, Empire and the Natural History of Race in Nineteenth- Century Britain"
Sadiah Qureshi, Senior Lecturer in Modern History, University of Birmingham

Saturday, May 25

10:00-11:15 Panel 3
"Fugitive Pigments: Painting and Race in the British Atlantic"
Nika Elder, Assistant Professor of Art History, American University

"Mapping the Slave Trade"
Cheryl Finley, Associate Professor of Art History, Cornell University

11:30-12:45 Panel 4
"Framing the Plantation: The Plantocracy, Artists, and Image Production of the Early Nineteenth Century"
Rachel Grace Newman, A.W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow, Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts

"Slavery, Patronage and the Love of Art: Slave-ownership and the Politics of Collecting in Early Nineteenth-century Britain"
Sarah Thomas, Lecturer in Museum Studies and History of Art, Birkbeck College, University of London

1:45-3:00 Panel 5
"Hybrid Exhibits: Race, Empire, and Genre at the British Institution in 1806"
Catherine Roach, Associate Professor of Art History, Virginia Commonwealth University "Constable's Whiteness"
Nicholas Robbins, Doctoral Candidate, History of Art, Yale University

3:15-4:30 Panel 6
"Ira Aldridge and the Performed Persona"
Caitlin Beach, Assistant Professor of Art History, Fordham University

"The Brazilian Imperial Academy of Fine Arts and the Transatlantic Slave Trade"
Daryle Williams, Associate Professor of History and Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs, College of Arts and Humanities, University of Maryland

4:30-5:15 Closing Discussion

Reference:
CONF: Art Institutions and Race in the Atlantic World (London, 24-25 May 19). In: ArtHist.net, Mar 13, 2019 (accessed Nov 21, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/20329>.